

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Policy & Performance Board  
**DATE:** 29<sup>th</sup> October 2013  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Policy & Resources  
**SUBJECT:** HSP Topic Group Review  
**WARDS:** All

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To provide members with a one year progress update on the recommendations from the Topic Group Review report on the Halton Strategic Partnership. The Topic Group originally reported to the Board in September 2012 and this Board's recommendations to the Executive Board were agreed by that Board on 8 November 2012.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

Members comment upon and note progress made.

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 In 2012, the Corporate Policy and Performance Board, as part of their topic programme, examined the role and function of the Halton Strategic Partnership (Halton's LSP) to identify need and establish where opportunities exist for future development and closer collaboration with the Council.

3.2 Terms of Reference were established for the group as follows:

- Understanding the Future Role of the HSP
- Asking does it meet the Council's Partnership check list requirements for "Partnerships"
- What its short and long term objectives are
- How they dovetail and inter-relate to the Council
- How its ongoing activities can be effectively scrutinised and how it is held to account.

3.2 The history, purpose, membership, objectives, activities and role of the Halton Strategic Partnership (HSP) were considered. Members also put forward proposals for how the relationship between the PPBs and the HSP could be strengthened, how agendas could be more closely interrelated and how ongoing activities could be effectively scrutinised.

3.3 Attached as an appendix to this report is a copy of the Action Plan that was agreed when the report was considered by the Executive Board.

The right-hand column of that Plan shows the progress that has been made to date on each of the Topic Groups recommendations.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 With the pressure on public funding set to continue and the pressure on the Council's budget becoming more severe, having effective collaborative working arrangements with partner organisations becomes even more important. It is important that they are kept under review and that every opportunity is taken to ensure the collective spend of public money in the Borough is being done to the maximum benefit.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Support for the Halton Strategic Partnership and associated SSPs is currently met from within Halton Borough Council. Following the recent restructure in Policy, Performance and Communications and Marketing services, this is now limited to the time of one full time Partnership Officer. Additional specialist policy advice to the Board and SSPs is provided through other Policy Officers as needed. The Council has therefore reduced its input into the HSPB structure considerably.
- 5.2 In addition to staff time, there are costs associated with meeting the running costs of Partnership activity, including room hire, refreshments, printing etc. These have previously been met via Working Neighbourhoods Funding (WNF), however, the removal of the funding means that from 2014 onwards these costs will need to be met elsewhere.
- 5.3 One of the recommendations contained within the original report is that the possibility of partners making either a financial or in-kind contribution is explored in order to recognise the strategic importance and contribution the HSP makes in improving outcomes for partners and residents of Halton, and to alleviate some of the financial burden on Halton Borough Council in these times of diminishing resources. Talks are underway around implementing this.

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCILS PRIORITIES**

##### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

The Halton Strategic Partnership is responsible for developing and overseeing Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy which sets out Children and Young People as a key priority. Activity undertaken by the SSP for Children and Young People is reported back to the HSPB.

##### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

The Halton Strategic Partnership is responsible for developing and overseeing Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy which sets out

Employment, Learning and Skills as a key priority. Activity undertaken by the SSP for Employment, Learning and Skills is reported back to the HSPB.

### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

The Halton Strategic Partnership is responsible for developing and overseeing Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy which sets out Health as a key priority. Activity undertaken by the Health and Wellbeing Board is reported back to the HSPB.

### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

The Halton Strategic Partnership is responsible for developing and overseeing Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy which sets out Safer Halton as a key priority. Activity undertaken by the Safer Halton SSP is reported back to the HSPB.

### **6.5 Environment & Regeneration in Halton**

The Halton Strategic Partnership is responsible for developing and overseeing Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy which sets out Environment and Regeneration as a key priority. Activity undertaken by the SSP for Environment and Regeneration is reported back to the HSPB.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Partnerships, along with the rest of the public sector are faced with the additional pressure of managing a significant reduction in resources – both in terms of support staff and also the money available for joint activities (performance-related grants etc.) – at a time when, if anything, even greater effort needs to be put in to keep partners 'at the table'. LSPs, in their own right are not statutory bodies, and their success therefore depends on the voluntary participation of partners.

7.3 The HSP offers an opportunity to join up partner activities and maximise resources which is more critical than ever in the current climate. The challenge is therefore to develop and harness the power of the partnership to achieve this opportunity

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 An Equality Impact assessment on this review is not necessary.